Pulpit Preaching

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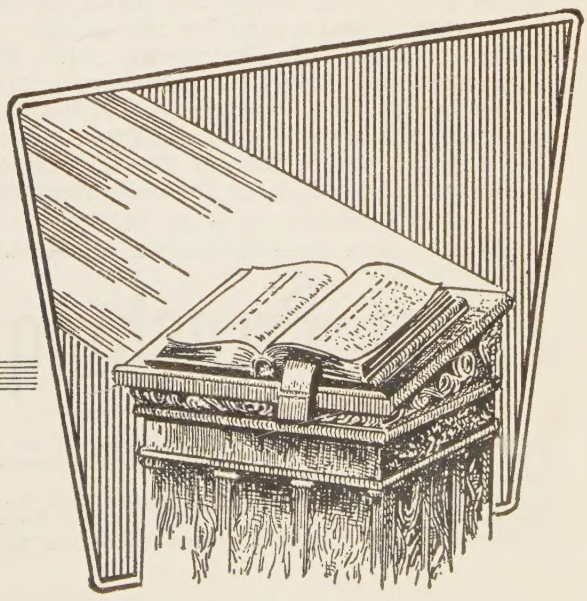

A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL FOR MINISTERS

Editorial Comments

"Season of Renewal," this month's first theme, centers in significant Lenten emphases. "The Easter Confidence" contains reaffirmations of the Easter message.

Next month's themes will be "Building Christian Homes" and "New Lessons from the Old Testament."

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Books For Pulpit Preaching

The Touch of the Master's Hand, Charles L. Allen (Revell, 158 pp., $2.)

The Christian and His America, Gerald Kennedy (Harper & Brothers, 175 pp., $3.)

Put Your Faith to Work, Karl H. A. Rest (Muhlenberg, 186 pp., $2.75.)

Prescription for Anxiety, Leslie D. Weatherhead (Abingdon, 157 pp., $2.50.)

Rand McNally Bible Atlas, Emil G. Kraeling (Rand McNally, 487 pp., $8.95.)

A New Harmony of the Gospels. Albert Cassel Wieand (Eerdmans, 268 pp., $4.50.)

Sermons from an Ecumenical Pulpit, ed. by Max F. Daskam (Beacon, 254 pp., $5.80.)

The Touch of the Master's Hand is a book about the miracles of Jesus. Twenty-two winsome and persuasive chapters recapture the setting of Jesus' ministry and show how the hand of the living Lord reaches across twenty centuries to inspire and heal . . . *The Christian and His America* is based on Bishop Kennedy's estimate that "America is a faith and its greatness is rooted in Christianity." The book is as broad as this nation and as immediate as today's most persistent spiritual needs. Here is the spiritual essence of our national character, written in a prophetic conviction that God has yet a purpose and a plan for this people.

The meaning of Christianity and the Church is forcefully and effectively presented in *Put Your Faith to Work.* Written especially for laymen, this challenging book is a natural vehicle for for the instruction of new members and for the enlightenment

(Continued on page 14)

Worth Quoting

EDITED BY PAUL HOVEY

One of the characters in a novel by Hug Walpole cries out: "You know there can be a God, Vanessa. You are a wise woma How can there be a God and life be as it is If there is a God, He ought to be asham of Himself." The only answer you'll get wi be "a fluttering of the veil of silence" whic rests over our hurt world: as if the onl authentic glory at the heart of all create things were this love that stirs for a mo ment and is still; the final majesty of th Eternal God, that lonely figure, with hi hands and feet pierced for such little peo ple because he thought they were great.

Paul Scherer in *Sermons from a Ecumenical Pulpit* (Beacon Press)

* * * *

"What is life all about?" The question i often asked but people do not always sto and wait for an answer. Busy with man things, they do not concern themselves wit the ultimate questions of life, though, o course, they would not mind finding out i it could be done without too much bothe "The trouble with many of us," says Doro thy Canfield Fisher, "is that we just slid along in life." And then she poses a tes which serves as an eye opener, showing u how thoughtless our life often is. "If w would only give, just once," she says, "th amount of reflection to what we want t get out of life that we give to the questio of what to do with a two weeks' vacatio we would be startled at our false standard and the aimless procession of our bus days."

Karl H. A. Rest, *Put Your Fait to Work* (Muhlenberg Press).

* * * *

At the beginning of the Civil War, th North had a much-admired general by th name of McClellan. He was a first-rate mil tary man so far as knowledge of the scienc of war was concerned. There were few me who could as quickly take a mob of raw re

(Continued on page 14)

Pulpit Preaching

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PETER H. PLEUNE
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The Fulness of the Stature of Christ

PETER H. PLEUNE, Highland Presbyterian Church, Louisville, Kentucky

Scripture: Ephesians 4: 1-13

Paul speaks here of the fulness of Christ. I take it that he means the whole of Christ, not a part of him. As a matter of fact Jesus Christ means so much, and life and his message so broad and inclusive, that only a part of him may easily be taken for the whole. It is clearly possible to look at Christ and to be so impressed by something that we see in him and to be so enthralled by that, that we do not see the rest.

Historically that church has made some drastic mistakes in this way. In New England in the 18th and early 19th centuries the theology of the church centered in the divinity of Jesus. That emphasis was true enough, but the church thought too little about Christ's humanity. There were some few men in the church, however, who felt that the human Jesus had a meaning and message for them. They tried to present that side to others. But the divinity-centered church would have none of it and cast these men out of their membership. And as a natural result those of whom the human side of Jesus had a real appeal overstressed that and came to take the part for the whole. But the church had been doing that, too, only putting his divinity for the whole of Christ and ignoring his humanity. If the church of our fathers had had a big enough view of Christ to include all of him, we never would have had a Unitarian church with its message of only half a Christ, the human side alone.

And for the same general reason we have Christian Science church today. Those who came to appreciate the healing ministry of Jesus and his thought for the bodily ills of men found that this in their time was not at all a part of the church's conception of Jesus. The healing side of Jesus' ministry was certainly neglected in that day, and finding no room within the church for this side of Jesus' ministry some were moved to press their views until, in their insistence upon them, they too took this part for the whole, and founded a separate group which we now know as the Christian Science church. It is tragic that some men had to leave the church in order to proclaim the humanity of Jesus and his healing ministry.

MAN AND SOCIETY

Jesus in his earthly ministry had regard also for the social needs of men. The opposition of the Pharisees in his day stemmed from his interest in the common man and the failure of the Temple formalism to minister at all the common needs of men. The interest of the Pharisees was confined to the Temple procedure and had nothing to do with the ordinary life of men. There is still a division in thought about whether the ministry of Jesus is social or personal. Some in their emphasis on the outward condition of men's lives insist that Christ came to change and transform the social structure. Others insist that his message and purpose was purely personal and individual. Almost any labor leader will tell you that if Christ came to earth today he would be a labor leader and would ignore the church. And, on the other hand, there are many within the church who argue for the "spirituality of the church." Now Christ is both a social reformer and the Savior for individual life. Either of these views of Christ alone is only a partial view of him.

There is also a part of Christian thought which is concerned primarily with the end of things, eschatology. It is a word from the Greek which refers to the happenings a long way off when Christ shall come again as he promised to do. Now some people take this as the main subject of their thought and action in Christianity. All their thought about Christ is concerned with the future. Their interest in the present is in their insistence that the evils of the present are an indication that the coming will be soon. It is, of course, a fact that Christ will come again. When it will be nobody knows. We were not mean to know. And to concentrate solely on a returning Christ, as if that were all of the Gospel, is to have only a part of the Gospel.

Surely it is not difficult for anyone of us to recognize how in these instances a partial Christ is accepted rather than a whole Christ. Yet most of us are doing that every day. Not probably in the ways we have

mentioned, but many of us in our personal satisfaction in possessing some Christian virtues are not mindful of how far short we are of having all of Christ. Now half a Christ makes half a Christian. It may be said that a half a loaf is better than none. That is true enough about bread, but a half a loaf is a mighty poor and weakening diet for a strong life.

TAKING CHRIST LITERALLY

There are many ways in which we have only a partial Christ because he has only a part of us. It is possible, for one thing, to manifest only a small allegiance to Christ when we give our money. It is so easy to get people to give money today for Christian causes that I am often disturbed by the very fact of the facility with which the church raises money. It is possible to substitute the giving of money for the giving of self. And I am terribly afraid that today in our frequent appeals for money and our stressing of the size of the gift we may be almost suggesting to people that if they measure up to a high level with their pocket books that is being a real Christian. Giving money is a part of being a Christian, for money is a determining thing. But it remains forever true that "the gift without the giver is bare." No man ever actually pays in cash or pays in one lump sum for his Christianity. He rather pays for it on the installment plan running for all his life; and the payments are not in money alone, but in thought and words and deeds, that is with oneself.

A part of being a Christian is to take Christ literally. We can take his promises literally. He definitely promises us many things, and many of them are in the nature of assurance and comfort and surcease from trouble and care. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." "I will not leave you comfortless." "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." "I am come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly." It is true, all true. Yet Jesus is not one just to comfort and to soothe and to smooth out the rough spots, for he is disturbing and challenging also. He never promised an easy going life. There is nothing placid or prosy or commonplace about Jesus' kind of life. His disciples back in Galilee soon found that out, but it made them men.

EVERLASTING BLISS

Several years ago a little play, produced in the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York, was called "A Morality Play for the Leisure Class." Its central figure was a man of means who was living a comfortable, easy life. He was quite orthodox in his religious faith. He believed in a future life and in a state of future rewards and punishments but things seemed to be going so well with him here that he was not at all concerned about that in reference to himself. He was sure of His future.

He was killed one day in an automobile accident. When he went to the other side and did not see anyone about he called, "Is there anyone here?" Then a white robed attendant appeared and asked what he could do for his comfort and pleasure.

"What can I have?" asked the man. "Anything you like," the attendant answered. "How about a golden crown?" Instantly he had a golden, starry studded crown.

"What else can I have?" "Anything you like," was the answer to every question. So he ordered a lot of good things to eat and to wear. He got them at once. He expressed a wish for a handsome apartment in which to live. It was granted with its sumptuous appointments.

If he wanted to read, there was a full library at hand. If he wanted music, he could listen to the best. For companionship he could have many famous people he had heard about on earth. It was a marvelous plan. So he went on ordering all the good things he could think of.

But after a few weeks he began to get a little tired of it. He then asked for some work to do. He was promptly told that in this unseen world nobody worked. Everybody could have what they wanted without working for it. So things went on as they were. But finally it really began to pall upon him terribly. One day he burst out impatiently "Oh, I'm sick of all this everlasting bliss I would rather be in Hell."

Said the atendant with surprise: "Where do you think you are? This is Hell."

Life in Hell is like the kind of life of which the poet wrote, "a ghastly smooth life dead at heart." And that kind of life may be true here, too. No true Christian life is ever a ghastly smooth life. "In this world ye shall have tribulation," said Jesus. And until we do have some of it, we will never have a full Christian life or need the help of him who himself knew what it was to overcome.

SPIRIT OF CHRIST

Furthermore, said Jesus, "Not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father who is in heaven." In other words what a man says or what he professes to be

ve is not the measure of him, but what he and what he does. Beliefs matter, but they o not matter enough if they stop with be- g merely something to believe. To be a hristian takes something more than be- ving something about Christ; it requires e spirit of Jesus in us. Dwight L. Moody, e noted evangelist, was a great soul be- use he had the spirit of Jesus as well as rong beliefs about Christ. In his theologi- al beliefs he was a conservative, yet he was o broad-minded that he invited liberals like eorge Adam Smith and Henry Drummond his Northfield conferences. Henry Drum- ond spoke there just after he had finished is Lowell Foundation Lectures at Harvard n the subject of evolution. That was a day hen evolution was a controversial subject deed.

Mr. Moody was taken to task by some of is conservative supporters. "How can you," ey said, "invite a man like Drummond to orthfield when he thinks we were all de- ended from monkeys." "Well," said Mr. oody, "I cannot say that I believe in all is notions, but he is more like Jesus Christ an any man I know, and so I invited him re."

Well, Henry Drummond was a very hrist-like man, and he had a most profound fect upon the college youth of his day. eorge Adam Smith, who knew Drummond ell, said of him, "He was a tall, little, raceful, well-dressed gentleman. He was en for any one of a hundred different terests. He fished, he hunted, he skated as w men could. He played billiards and icket and golf with rare skill. Every time you met him he had a new story, a new joke, a new puzzle. You met him on a train and he would show you a fresh story from his favorite Bret Harte, or some serious article from a recent review. It might be a rainy afternoon in the country, and he would describe a new game and in five minutes everybody would be playing it. At a children's party everybody would be clamoring for his light-of-hand tricks. If you met him alone he would know what interested you most, and would listen to you by the hour. He was the embodiment of thoughtful, instant kindness, and men took knowledge of him that he had been with Jesus. What a life his was!"

Henry Drummond and his kind, are like that because they have gotten hold of all of Christ—or allowed him to get hold of all of them. They are not just halfway Christians. They do not just believe something about Jesus. They let him live in them. They have grown up to "mature manhood, to the measure of the fulness of the stature of Christ."

It is a pity that any of us ever have only a halfway Christ when Christ is so much more. He offers all of himself for all of us.

On a tombstone of a missionary who died in a distant land there is inscribed the epitaph, "Here lies a man whose life it takes Jesus Christ to explain." That is measuring up to the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Will you ponder this today, "While it is true that only Christ can save the world, all that the world sees of Christ it sees in you and me."

ew Gates in an Old Fence

HAROLD BLAKE WALKER, First Presbyterian Church, Evanston, Illinois

Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. —II Peter 3:4.

Forty years or more after the crucifixion e Christian community faced a crisis. Lit- e by little it was becoming less certain at Jesus would return to the earth "on ouds of glory" to establish his kingdom y might and power." The struggle of the hristian against the brutal strength of the oman Empire and the stubborn inertia of pagan society had left many "followers of e way" discouraged. They were thwarted, iscriminated against and persecuted. Their orld seemed to be getting no better. Here nd there Christians were asking: "Where is e promise of his coming?" The future oked black, for, as they saw it, "since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

The author of Second Peter took note of the mood of frustration which beset many of his contemporaries. He had not given up hope of the second coming. He did not understand why God had waited so long to establish "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," but he was not in the least discouraged. It did not occur to him to sit down and wait for God to establish Utopia. On the contrary, if God had temporarily closed one gate to "new heavens and a new earth," there was another gate

that could be opened. Christians could do something about themselves and their world. They could "giving all diligence, add to their faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love."

I

There is a bit of wisdom for us all in Peter's advice to the Christians of his time. He wanted his contemporaries to understand that frustration is by no means final. They might well be fenced in by very difficult circumstances, but they were not finished. If one gate seemed to be closed, they could find another and keep on going. If God would not perform a miracle and create Utopia, they could do something to make the world better than it was. The history of the first three centuries testifies to the fact that the new gate Peter suggested led to green pastures. Jesus did not come "in clouds of glory," but the Christians won the Roman Empire.

You and I are familiar with frustration. Everywhere we turn we meet the blunt fact of it. We are fenced in, stopped in our tracks, surrounded by barbed wire. Again and again men have said in talking about their jobs: "There is no place to go. I'm stuck where I am for the rest of my life." Young people feel frustration. They dream and hope and struggle for an economic toehold so that they can be married and build homes. But their goals seem endlessly postponed. Homes feel the weight of frustration. Two people get married and expect to be happy, and then somehow they cannot get along together. They feel fenced in and baffled, not knowing which way to turn. Everywhere there are people like the small boy who could not get along in school. Everything seemed to go wrong. Finally, in despair, he said to his mother: "I try and try and try, but it doesn't do any good." Quite literally, "Things continue as they were" in spite of everything.

People are fenced in, frustrated by their physical limitations. They have bad hearts, rheumatism, aching backs, migraine headaches. Every time they want to do something they have to say: "I can't. My heart won't let me." It is exasperating beyond measure. There are those who are frustrated by responsibilities they cannot dodge. There are young men who cannot go to college because they have to help support their families and young women who cannot get married because they are needed at home. No matter what they do, "all things continue as they were."

There are three unfortunate reactions to frustration which one sees in the behavior of people. The first is neurotic hostility. Dr. Jules Masserman of Northwestern University found that in this response to frustration cats are like people. He did not pull cats' tails as we used to do when we were children, but he refined the art of irritating cats. Cats, like the rest of us, enjoy eating in peace. Dr. Masserman made his cats neurotic with blasts of air across their noses every time they reached for food. Some of the cats became spittingly and snarlingly aggressive, taking out their frustration on other cats, turning cat society into a bedlam of conflict.

About an equal number of cats reacted to frustration with sheer kittenish helplessness. Their frustration made them into defeatists. If they could not eat without frustrating air blasts, they just would not eat. They behaved like people who blunder into baffling circumstances and come away saying helplessly, "What's the use?" resigning themselves to the unhappy fate of tearful despair. Such people fall into the self-pity that says: "Nobody loves me; everybody hates me."

There is, then, a third response that seems quite beyond cats. There are people who strike out against their frustration with drink or drugs. A young man in a contemporary novel described his father's plodding despair, and then how his father would go on periodic sprees. He would spend money he did have and get gloriously drunk. By way of explanation the young man remarked: "It was dad's way of spitting in fate's eye." Most of us would like to pay our respects to fate now and then, just to relieve our pent-up frustration and to escape from the burden of defeat. Nevertheless, "spitting in fate's eye" by indulging in a spree is a sure way of making "all things continue as they were."

The world is full of defeated men and women who have accepted their frustration as final. They are beset by neurotic hostility, defeatism, or they are candidates for Skid Row. They live without lustre; they struggle without any sense of significance; they plod without power; and they die without regret. They have come to the devastating conclusion that "since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the be

nning of creation." Nothing, they are sure, n change anything.

II

Happily, however, there are those who ve demonstrated conclusively that frustran does not need to be final. There always e new gates in the fences that hem us in. ke the exile Jews of Babylon. It was out their frustration that grandeur came, the ory of an unconquerable faith in the goodss and sovereignty of God, singing its ay through the years. Believe me, their ustration was anything but final. They ade something glorious of it. There was e apostle Paul, stoned, shipwrecked, imisoned and struggling with illness, frurated at every turn, but somehow his frusation turned out "unto the progress of the spel."

Last summer I went to Colorado feeling e frustration of a tired preacher. I think I lt in Paul's mood when he wondered about he foolishness of preaching." Sitting on bench musing, I noticed a steady stream ants hurrying to and from an old tree ump. Perversely I hauled half of an old ilroad tie down the hill and dropped it to the path of the ants. Ants scurried adly in all directions for a moment. Then lf a dozen ants tentatively examined the stacle in their way. Two ants started tord each end of the tie. Two others start climbing up to the top of the tie and wn the other side. The ants who had made d runs turned around and came back to e middle of the log and started up. Soon e colony of ants was moving over the log d back in a steady stream as if nothing d happened. I wondered then if God had hand in that episode. He speaks to us in ysterious ways for our guidance. Maybe was trying to say that obstacles and ustration can be overcome.

While I was musing there, I thought of a eat lady who had died a year before. She ver married because she had her mother her hands for many years. She wanted home and children, but the gate was closed. e might have become an embittered spiner, defeated by circumstances. She found nother gate. If she could not have chilren her own, she could give her life to chilen. If she could not have love and children her own, she could guide the children of hers. She became a kindergarten teacher d then organized a school for kindergarten achers. She was radiant. She loved life. hen she was dying, at eighty-three, she uckled through her pain and remarked: "Funny, but I don't know how to go about dying. I never did it before." Her frustration was not final; it simply pointed her to a new gate of life.

We often live lives of "quiet desperation" because we do not see that obstacles can be opportunities. Gina Kaus remarks that Catherine the Great "flourished in adversity" and 'grew great by her capacity for enduring humiliation." Her husband was a disreputable man, who flaunted his mistress before his wife and the whole court. But, by way of her humiliation, Catherine won the greatest struggle of her career—she won self-mastery and inner serenity. Catherine's obstacle was not an easy one to conquer, but she found reserves of spirit to make something of her humiliation. She might well have said:

> "I will not make of circumstances my jailer and my fate,
> I will step forth to victory through every failure's gate."

Timothy Dwight, one-time president of Yale University, looked back upon the failure of his eyes as a kind event within God's providence. The permanent weakness of his eyes altered his habits. He could not read, but he could meditate. He could not study, but he could observe. He could not go on mastering the classics of the world by firsthand investigation, but he could extract information from conversation. Years after the failure of his eyes he noted that the most useful information comes not from books, but from reading life itself. Ruined eyes did not keep him from being a great teacher and learning what he wanted to know. He found a new gate in the fence that thwarted his path. He echoed the observation of the Blind Plowman: "God took away my sight that my soul might see."

III

The most obvious, and yet the most deceptive, fact about frustration is that it is the consequence of circumstances beyond our control. The fact that the Christians of the first century met opposition and persecution at every turn of the road was not their fault. The social and moral patterns of pagan society stood against everything the Christians believed. The economic fences that thwart us, the illnesses and the baffling responsibilities we have to accept usually are not our fault. Nevertheless, the key to the conquest of frustrating circumstances is not in the circumstances but in us. The Christians of the first century faced their frustration in two ways. One group, discouraged

and downcast, said: "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." The other group, equally thwarted and baffled, found the key to the conquest of their frustration in themselves. They compounded, as Peter said, faith and virtue, knowledge and temperance, patience and godliness, and in due time were able to overcome their frustration.

So, when we meet frustration, our most urgent task is to take charge of ourselves. It is all too clear that we will get nowhere at all riding off in all directions in flustered irritation. Elijah did that when he was thwarted and apparently stopped by the might and the opposition of Queen Jezebel. We have two portraits of Elijah that are portraits of ourselves. Etched in vivid words is the picture of Elijah weeping beneath a juniper tree. Everything is lost, there is no hope and Elijah is a picture of dejection and despair. The second portrait is painted atop Mount Horeb, where Elijah had fled to get away from it all. Elijah has been asleep, listening in his dreams to the roar of "earthquake, wind and fire," grim reminders of his struggle with Jezebel. Rubbing the sleep from his eyes, he is startled by the voice of God asking a very embarrassing question: "Elijah, what doest thou here?"

Elijah might have answered that he was trying to get himself under control, but he had not thought of that. Instead he explained his heroic struggle with Jezebel and pointed to the fact he was hemmed in now and afraid. "They seek my life, to take it away," he complained. Quite literally, God said to Elijah: "Your trouble is you. You are not alone; there are seven thousand others in Israel who are on your side, and I the Lord God of Israel, am on your side too." So, Elijah took charge of Elijah and found an inner gate through his outward frustration.

Nine times out of ten we can find gates through our frustration if we are able to take command of ourselves and focus our powers on our problems. Here, for example, are parents, baffled and confused by the impossible behavious of a son or daughter. One thing is clear: they will not be able to manage their children until they get themselves thoroughly in hand. Here is a man whose business is not doing too well. He has a nervous stomach and high blood pressure because, he says, of business burdens. Pardon me if I say that is nonsense. He has a nervous stomach and high blood pressure because he has not taken charge of himself. He is not running his business, he is being run by it. He is too fenced in by difficulties that are beyond him to look for gates within him. So, "all things continue as they were" with tension and strain almost unbearable.

IV

One of the curious things about human behaviour is our reluctance to ask for help when we have lost control of ourselves. Maybe it is pride that makes us stubborn. We have the strange notion that religion was invented for the weak, especially for women. We can manage our own affairs, thank you, even if we do get ulcers. Yes, we are frustrated, but we will keep on banging away and manage somehow. Henry Drummond, who used to speak to men with great power, noted the folly of men who were torn by tensions and irritated by obstacles. Then he remarked: "Peace is the possession of adequate resources."

So, our adequacy to manage ourselves when we are fenced in depends upon the possession of spiritual reserves. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." Those words came from Isaiah the prophet, and they did not come from an ivory tower. They came out of a stormy time when Israel was threatened with disaster and the exile was just around the corner. They were spoken just a little while before Sennacherib and the Assyrians laid siege to Jerusalem. They were uttered when men and women were afraid they could not manage the stress of their times. But Isaiah knew they never could handle their troubles without resources to hold them steady.

We never are able to meet our frustrations and turn them to account unless we meet them "in quietness and confidence" with God. But, as Thomas a Kempis observed, we never find that "quietness and confidence" without availing ourselves of the means to them. Serenity and inner security do not come by the Peer Gynt technique of "taking religion intermittently." Peer Gynt took his religion in a "don't-let-it-bother-you-too-much" sort of way. It never did him much good, nor will it do anybody much good. "Religion's all or nothing." It is an inner flame that we feed in prayer and worship and in the silence alone with God or it is not a resource, it is a burden.

Years ago I used to play in a little stream that ran in front of our mountain cottage I can remember trying to dam that little stream with rocks and dirt. At first it was

asy, but the little stream always defeated ne in the end by bringing never-ending eserves from the rear. First the water ould break out to the left, and when I topped it there, it would break out on the ight. Blocked in one direction it forced its way through in another until my dam collapsed. Jesus would have us understand that ife with God is like that little stream. It annot be stopped because there are endless eserves to keep it going.

Jesus never would have meant what he neans to the world if he had not managed himself so magnificently in the face of his rustrations. His enemies hemmed him in n all sides. They tried to undermine him with lies and false accusations. They threatned him, put obstacles in his way and at last rowned him with thorns and crucified him between two thieves. Why did he conquer? Why did his cross of shame become a symbol of triumph? The early Christians had the answer: "God was in Christ," and even death could not stop him. He had endless reserves to see him through his frustration. All through the centuries he has been trying to tell us that God can be in us, too. He has been trying to tell us there are new inward gates in the old outward fences that hem us in if only we will "seek and find."

When life is fenced in and we are thwarted, it is easy to say: "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But, by the grace of God, we can carry on beyond the shadows of our frustration to "new heavens and a new earth."

Having a Faith Worth Having

FRANK A. COURT, St. Paul Methodist Church, Lincoln, Nebraska

The right kind of a faith finds a spiritual meaning in life, an eternal purpose or dream o which the world is moving and a deathess hope that is a vital part of our spiritual heritage. Or, as the Book of Hebrews would ut it, "It is a substance of things hoped or, the evidence of things not seen."

Naturally this is not a matter that can e mathematically proved, nor sustained by ome manipulation of given theories. On the ther hand, neither by these same methods an it be disproved. Rather it is an assurance, an inner conviction, an understanding f the mind and heart as we listen to the very heart-beat of life.

A faith that senses an eternal meaning hroughout all of life may not have an answer to all of the perplexing problems, dark moments and riddles of despair. But there s a certainty and an assurance that there s a divine plan, an eternal meaning, that lays upon the hearts of men. We do not now how far down the centuries Jesus ould possibly have looked as the darkening louds of the Cross closed in around him. Did these encircling clouds shut out the orizon and the far view down the corridor f time? We do not know. But what a revelation of a belief and an eternal meaning ou can find as you stand at the foot of the Cross and listen to his dying words. A prayr of love, for forgiveness of those who laced him there, a confidence that his powr is not broken as He promises a dying hief that "today" he shall be with Him in aradise, the utter desolation of a thought hat He may be forsaken, a cry of thirst, and then slowly the ascendency of a spirit marching God-ward with banners flying, a hallelujah chorus of eternal hope, "It is finished. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." A faith worth having is the assurance that regardless of what life may bring or do, still one can commend his life to a power that fails not, the eternal spirit of God.

It seems so easy to lose one's faith in the bigness and vastness of the universe, the unending reaches of space, the tragic happenstances of our time, the cruelty of man to man and the beastliness of man at his worst. The man of faith does not deny the power of evil, the tragedy of life, and the heartbreak of the children of men. However, knowing the worst, he still believes in the best. He reads the tragedy of life as man's willfulness and a denial of the Spirit of God. He believes this world ultimately will be controled and governed by the Spirit of God and, regardless of consequences and happenings or failures, he gives his life in the certainty of that undying faith.

From Abraham through Moses, from Christ to His followers, from the Gandhi to Albert Schweitzer, a faith worth having has meant a gallant venturing of life for imperishable dreams, living hopes and life-giving ideals in the belief that they are not man-created, but God-implanted within the heart of humanity. These dreams may not come true in our time any more than they came true in the days when Hebrews was written, but they will come true and man some day will gather around the hearth-side

of God and live in a truer and better world because men have been willing to live and perish for the dream. Such is the essence of a faith worth having.

SENSE OF ADEQUACY

Moreover, a faith worth having brings a sense of well-being, a feeling of adequacy in the thought that within life there is a spirit, a sacred core, the life of God that enables one to find a spiritual victory in all of life's vicissitudes.

It is represented by the spirit of Paul saying, "I can do all things through Christ Jesus." This sense of spiritual well-being or assurance doesn't spring from a belief in man's own might and power but from the adequate spiritual reserves for any emergency that life may bring. We are not able to explain all about prayer, but we know that when our soul is joined in prayer with the ever-living spirit of God something happens within life. Doors are opened. We discover a power not our own and rising from our knees there is the feeling that there are adequate reserves to draw upon.

William O. Douglas in his book *Beyond the High Himalayas* relates that when he was walking with his porters up the old mountain trail in Tibet a terrific storm overtook them. He was separated from his companions. He wondered if he was going to get through alive. Then he found himself saying over the old prayer of the colored minister, "O Lord, don't let anything come my way that You and I can't handle together." Against the storm, and the mountain torrent, he battled his way up to safety and a mountain shelter. In prayer there is the feeling that life will not bring anything that God and a dedicated spirit will not be able to handle together.

A movie was made out of one of the finest plays built around the tragedy of the first world war. *Seventh Heaven* is the story of Diana and Chico, people who led drab, ordinary lives in Paris, yet find in their life and love together the spirit that makes them look to the stars. Chico, working in the sewers of Paris, states that you are never defeated as long as you look up. When he meets Diana and she protests that she is not a good person, Chico says, "You never are bad if you are not happy with what you are." Then the first world war sweeps over Paris. Chico goes off to war and even though word is brought back that he is killed Diana will not believe it. When the war is over her hopes are justified as Chico, now blind and out of the hospital, comes feeling his way back home. Diana hears him, reaching, tapping, creeping along the stairs. She rushes down and greets him and together they make their way up the seven flights of the Paris tenement to the top attic story where in their poverty they will live. As they go out upon the roof, the story comes to a dramatic climax as the stars become a symbol of their faith. It is a story of the triumph of man's spirit over darkness. There is that in man which from the darkness to the stars and in his bitter night of defeat gives him the inner assurance of victory.

WORTHWHILENESS OF LIFE

Another mark of a true faith is a belief in people and the worthwhileness of life. Harry Overstreet calls this the "great enterprise," that is, our learning how to live together. Strange to say, his book on how to live with others is primarily a book on living with yourself. Happy, well-adjusted and creative individuals are able to live with others because they are able to live with themselves. Human relations are almost a reflection of our own subjective attitudes, as roadside reflectors light up from our own headlights. The person who really knows how to live with his inner self is the person who really knows to live with others.

Overstreet believes that there are false relationships with our own inner life that will keep us from living joyously with others. We may have a false sense of our own importance and thus we under-estimate the value of others. Or, we may under-estimate our own gift to life and thus have a feeling of inferiority which over-estimates the value and contribution of others. It is only as we are well-adjusted in our inner self that we are able to live in these right relationships. A real faith will enable us to sense the value of the life of others, our common need and tie us together in the dynamic of love.

Christainity is a religion, not of suppressing the worthwhileness of life, but of drawing out the fineness of others through human contacts. Jesus called it the essence of love and understanding. How He was able to draw out of individuals the best that was there. What a record the New Testament fellowship is; Matthew, a tax-gatherer, becoming the author of the First Gospel; Peter, the impetuous, dynamic fisherman, becoming the martyr at Rome; Thomas, the doubter, becoming the man of courage and of faith; Mary Magdalene becoming Mary, the follower of Christ. It is the romance of what life may become in the fellowship of the Christ.

Hate, suspicion, fear always are destroy-

ng forces. In the life of individuals they ring conflict. Confine them in a home and hey become strain and tension. In industry hey lead to class hatred. In a nation they ecome racialism. In an international situ- tion war results. Who can believe in such estructive forces?

On the other hand, put Christian love in he life of an individual and it means happi- ess. In a home it means satisfying rela- ionships. In industry it means profit-shar- ng and brotherhood. In a nation it means understanding and democracy. In international relationships it means the council table and the peaceful solution of difficulties. The marks of a triumphant faith certainly carry over into the area of teaching us how to live together.

Here, too, we discover those areas or goals to which life is committed. Here is some deathless cause of brotherhood, world-betterment, the life of the church into which an individual places his gift of life. It is a belief in the eternal worthwhileness of things.

Contagious Christianity

CHARLES S. CLARKSON, Christ Methodist Church Roselle, Wilmington, Delaware

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. John 10:10.

In my sermon I shall ask three simple questions which, I hope, everyone can answer in the affirmative: Have you 'got" or caught the Christian religion? Have you caught the "catching kind," the only kind of Christianity? Are other people catching it from you? If you cannot answer these three questions in the affirmative, you have the wrong kind of religion, or you have made yourself immune to real Christianity.

First, what is religion anyway? What does it mean to have religion? It means to have the life of God in your soul. How does this life of God come into our souls? When we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord and we surrender our lives to His control. "He that hath the Son hath life." "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." This new life, being born again and from above, is a peculiar kind of life. It comes from receiving Christ into the heart by faith or trust.

DOORS TO GOD

There are two doors through which we must go to find or know God. The first door is that our experience of God's grace is in direct proportion to our sense of felt need. The Chinese have a list of three 'blesseds." They say a man is blessed or happy, who has much wealth, many children—especially boys—and long life. But Jesus says that the man is blessed and finds life, who is meek. We are blessed when we know there is no hope in ourselves. Man is blessed when he is weeping over other people's needs which he knows man cannot meet. Man is blessed when he is suffering such moral collapse that he is hungry for a change. When man is in this situation God can take hold. The second group of four "blesseds" of Jesus amount to the same thing. The people who are blessed are the ones who have gone out, in mercy and love, to make peace until they have been persecuted. They have tried to build a new world with the love of Christ, like the missionaries in communistic countries, and have been cast out bleeding and helpless from the mission fields. They now have only one resource, to turn to God. When man truly turns to God, forsakes himself and surrenders himself, God comes in!

The other door to the new life in Jesus Christ is forgiveness of others. One real reason why so many members of our churches have no real experience of God is because they will not forgive others. They are envious and jealous. They seek power in our churches, and they play cheap politics. They try to gain glory for themselves, and they offer no glory unto God. They carry grudges in their hearts. God cannot nor will not forgive them, because they will not meet the conditions for forgiveness.

Olin Stockwell, a Methodist missionary in China who was imprisoned by the Communists, writes: "I prayed God to take all hate out of my heart, to put love in, and to reign there Himself." Then he says: "That is just what happened. The two doors of self-surrender and forgiveness were wide open, and in flowed peace, contentment and joy." Have you caught Christianity — the life of God in the soul of man? If you have not wholly surrendered to God in Christ and forgiven others, you have an inadequate religion. God can do little for you, for you will not meet the conditions of having the life of God in your soul.

CONTACT WITH JESUS

The second quality of contagious Christianity is that our religion is "catching." Other people, when they come in contact with us, catch some of our spirit and our way of looking at things, if we are Christian and reflect the real experience. True Christianity is as catching as measles. When people came in contact with Jesus they saw themselves as God saw them. They saw how small they were. They longed to be like Him, have His serenity of spirit, His mastery and love of life, and His love for people and His Father. Jesus, both in His words and life, made goodness attractive. I have seen some professed Christians who were so sad faced, so cantankerous, so hard to live with, so negative in their approach to everything, that I had no desire for their kind of Christianity. Such people are not experiencing in their lives the fruits of the Spirit as listed by Paul: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. They do not have a contagious kind of religion. Religion, for them, is dull and depressing. They endure life, but do not enjoy it. They are afraid to surrender themselves to God, and let God in Christ remake them. But when Christ is at the center of life, He comes alive in us, and being alive in us, He causes a radiant, catching kind of religion. The early Christians 'out-thought, out-lived, out-loved and out-died" the people around them. The pagans said, "How those Christians loved one another." Christianity won in the Roman Empire because the early Christians had the catching kind of religion. It was impossible to live with the early Christians, and not be in danger of catching their religion. It was highly contagious. It was the kind that made Paul say, "What wilt Thou have me do, Lord?" It was like that of Stephen, who when stoned died with a radiant face, glimpsing into the very precincts of heaven. It was the kind that made the eleven disciples of our Lord lay their lives down for the Cause. This is the kind of contagious Christianity we so sorely need to revitalize our churches and win the respect of the world.

SHARING JESUS

Lastly, has anyone caught religion from you? When you stand before the judgment of Christ and receive the verdict of the Lord of lords and the Judge of all men, the verdict will be based on what you made of your life. The greatest factor in the making of our lives is the sharing of them. Jesus said "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and that he who would be greatest in the kingdom of God must become the servant of all. To find life, we must lose our lives. The more we give away of our religion, the more we will have. What a tragedy it is when not one person is "infected" by our religion and not a single person is influenced to become a Christian because of our influence!

Wake up, sleeping Christian, indifferent Christian! Pray for the souls of others. Live your Christianity before men. 'Ye are living epistles, known and read by all men." Share Christ with others. "Plead with them gently." Present Christ to them. Have a deep concern that others find Him, and, behold, as you share your new life in Christ it begins to grow mightily, and you do Christ's work in the world.

Have we got religion? Is it contagious? Has anyone caught it from us? What is the Spirit of God doing in our souls? Are we becoming new creations in Christ Jesus, our Lord? "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." He came that we might have the life of God in our souls.

The Hands of God

E. PAUL HOVEY, Congregational-Presbyterian Church, Lewiston, Idaho

Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit. Luke 23:46.

Some years ago in Denver a community Good Friday service was being conducted by the local ministers on the "Seven Words from the Cross." As the service was in progress an emergency call came to the minister assigned the Sixth Word, "It is finished," and he was prevented from taking part in the proper order. He did return as the final speaker, however. Someone suggested that maybe that was a better arrangement of the words and that "It is finished" should be the last word. Yet, consider the hopelessness of the world, if the last words from the lips of Jesus had been "It is finished!" The effect could have been one of defeat.

But we know that the death of Jesus was a victory! Mark's record says, "Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed his last." Frederick Grant suggests that the loud cry

as really a "great shout," not of despair, relief, or yet the broken body's last expiring protest against pain, but the shout a victor.

"It is finished" was not the last word on alvary. It was followed by the loud voice Jesus saying, "Father, into thy hands I ommend my spirit." Jesus did not die in espair, but in truimph.

The Lord reigns from the tree. Jesus eigns as king, even from the Cross. Jesus eaches us that it is the spirit that triumphs nd that we must not be deceived by the ain of the flesh nor allow an hour of agony overshadow the wealth and joy of life hich awaits us. We do not take a leap the dark; our spirits pass into the kind ands of God.

These hands were the hands of which ehemiah spoke of as the "good" hands of od. These were the hands which, accordng to the Psalmist, had fed and guided srael with skillfulness. These were the ands which the Chronicler claimed had provided" every good thing which Israel ad. "Into thy hands, Father!"

Jesus put his life trustingly into God's ands. The words, spoken from the cross, ere reserved solely for that moment at he end. They expressed the spirit of his hole life.

Charls Lamb wrote of a friend: "Who arted this life . . . dying as he had lived, ithout much trouble." What Lamb said of is friend is true of mankind in general. s a rule man dies as he has lived. There s nothing in the mere act of dying that akes a bad man good, or a good man bad. enerally we die as we have lived. So it as with Jesus. His words from the cross um up his life. There was no break beween his living and his home-going. As e turn the pages of the Gospels, we see hat what Jesus did in his final moments e had been doing throughout the years. Ve find that these words are from the salms. He was quoting his people's book of fe. His life and mind and heart had been o saturated with the scripture that both s thought and its language became his wn. He had a biblical background for his ving. He used it not only for his own livng, but also for the instruction of others. was only natural that in his last hour e should turn again to the words that had een his constant companion.

He did not, however, use the exact words the psalm. He added a word of his own, Father," and he made it a prayer. That, oo, had been a habit of his life.. Always he ad trusted his spirit to the hands of God.

Into the Father's hands he commended himself. Facing death, he put himself in his Father's hands. This has meaning for us. Such trust counts when we face the undiscovered country. We may turn to God, place our hands in his, and go on unafraid. In an hour of national peril, the King of England said to his troubled people: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light and safer than a known way."

Tasks must be finished. The word "commit" is sovereign, not only in the control of life, but in the quality of ourselves and all our endeavors. We are always committing ourselves, every day and in every deed.

Edward Gibbon left a classic account of his own state of mind when in a pavilion on the shore of Lake Geneva he had finished his monumental account of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*" In it all the elements which give high and even solemn significance to an ended task are almost perfectly combined. He notes the serenity of the lake and sky, the silence of nature, as though she were relaxing with him. He acknowledges his joy in the recovery of his freedom and "perhaps" the establishment of his fame, and then he writes: "My pride was soon humbled and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind by the thought that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, that whatsoever might be the future fate of my history, the life of the historian must be short and precarious."

His book, great as it was, was thereafter beyond his control. He had committed it. His readers bought or borrowed it, critics judged it, posterity inherited it. It became part of the stream of recorded history. The historian's work is not finished when he has written his last page, nor are farmer's when his last harvest is reaped, nor the statesman when his policies prevail, nor love's task and gift when it is past the Cross. Jesus in committing his life into God's hands made it a part of the will and purpose of God.

Jesus was rescuing Christianity from a dead, lifeless hand. He lived and died for the 'Realm of the Eternal." The Christian cause was not to be finished; it was to be surrendered to the hands of God. Jesus gave himself and His cause to God. And so, having made his final disposition of all that any man may leave, he died; his affairs were in order. He had come to reveal the Father. All his life he was revealing him,

and in his death he was not divided.

In July 1943, a vast armada of ships sailed from Malta to Sicily. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, surrounded by his staff, stood in the moonloight watching. Deeply moved, Eisenhoweer sprang to attention and saluted his heroic men. Then he bowed his head in silent prayer and his staff joined him. Turning to one beside him, Eisenhower said: "There comes a time when you've used your brains, your training, your technical skill, and the die is cast and the events are in the hands of God, and there you have to leave them."

That is what Jesus did! We ought to linger near the Cross long enough to catch his spirit. Not only in death, but in every experience of life. Our faith is expressed in the words, "Into thy hands, Father, we commit our spirits."

After Jesus had finished what he came to earth to do, a new day dawned for the children of God. Jesus returned to be with his father, but his righteous reign would encompass the world and its blessings would be available to all mankind. His earthly life was "finished" but his work was "committed" to the hands of God.

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

Continued from page 2

of experienced Christians. Chapters center in the basic beliefs about the Church, God, Christ, the Bible, prayer, sin and salvation. Ways are shown by which the church member may express his faith.

"How you can overcome fear and despair" is the sub-title of *Prescription for Anxiety.* Dr. Weatherhead's experience as a counsellor and his ability to draw from a wide observation of troubled people make the messages of this book convincing and helpful. With a depth of thought and faith frequently missing in this type of book, the author searches out the symptoms and causes of anxiety and then traces the various ways in which faith meets the need of men.

The Rand McNally Bible Atlas is a large, handsome book, containing forty full page, colored maps, 300 photographs and numerous sketches and diagrams. This wonderful asset for the class and the home presents a vivid and detailed picture of the Bible world and develops chronologically the story of the heritage of the Old Testament, the background of the New Testament and the beginnings of the Church. . . . *A New Harmony of the Gospels,* a book with a format large enough to permit the listing of Gospel materials in parallel columns, uses the Revised Standard Version. An overall analysis and divisional outlines facilitate the comparisons essential in the study of the Gospels.

Twenty-eight sermons are collected in *Sermons from an Ecumenical Pulpit,* a substantial anthology representing many of America's best known preachers (Pike, Tillich, Kennedy, Luccock, Scherer, Bosley, Thurman, Cleland, among others). The sermons fall into six divisions: What Goodness for Man, The Nature of God, The Name of Jesus, Religion and Churchgoing, The Disciplines of Faith, and The Larger Hope.

Worth Quoting

Continued from page 2

cruits and turn them into a well-trained army. But after the training was finished he would not or could not go further. He was not willing to risk a decision. He was not ready, or the odds were against him, or this particular engagement was not wise. An army was something to train and parade. Finally the President, in order to get a man who would act, had to remove him. It may be that none of McClellan's successors had as many gifts, but they were men who knew that a war could not be ended without a risk. In the battle of life action may be more important than genius.

Gerald Kennedy, *The Christian and His America* (Harper).

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When we believe there is a solution to any problem and faithfully take each step God reveals to us, eventually we will find the answer. It may not be the answer we thought we shoud find but it will be the right answer. If we want the power of Christ, we must trust and obey. Pierre and Marie Curie had made 487 experiments to try to separate radium from pitchblend. All had failed. Finally Pierre Curie said, "It can't be done; it can't be done. Maybe in a hundred years it can be done, but never in our lifetime." Madame Curie replied: "If it takes a hundred years it will be a pity, but I dare not do less than work for it so long as I have life." There is faith and obedience.

Charles L. Allen, *The Touch of the Master's Hand* (Revell) .

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Against the backdrop of modern life, with all of its chaos and confusion, we must positively bear witness to the fact that *Jesus Christ Is the Way.* The jungle in life today is no longer the maze of wild tigers, lions

ıd panthers, but the jungle of *ideas* — so-
al, political, and economic. These ideas
ın destroy us unless we turn to the only
lequate course for our solutions and bear
itness to the fact that *Christ Is the Way.*

Mrs. James D. Wyker

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The season of Lent need not primarily be
season of self-denial and self-sacrifice. It
ıght to be a season of fervent prayer and
ırnest meditation. The Christian's whole
fe should be a season of continuous prayer.
Prayer should never be a last resort. It
ıould always be a first aid. Prayer ought
ɔt be looked upon so much as a remedy,
s a preventive. It must not be permitted to
ɛcome an afterthought. Rather it should
ɛ a continuous forethought. Sad indeed the
ords, "To little, too late," when applicable
our prayers. Far better to strive to be
ways prepared through prayer. We should
ɛ as ready and regular about singing "Still,
ill with Thee, when purple morning
ɾeaketh," as we are about lifting our tired
ɔices in "Now the day is over, night is
ɾawing nigh."

* * * *

We must, first of all, understand the na-
ıre of man's need in the day in which we
ve. We live in a tumbleweed culture. Men
ɾe, for the most part, rootless today. We
ɾe talking with people who are restless,
ıssettled, insecure, and afraid. Alcoholism,
ıe high divorce rate, the mental break-
ɔwn rate, the enormous consumption of
ɛdatives, and other drugs for soothing
ɛrves, indicate the nature of our problem
s ministers. The answer to this problem is
ɔt in some spiritual sedative promising
ɛace of mind in ten pleasant doses; the
ıswer is in the Cross—in the good news
ıat God in Christ has opened a way to
ıer fulfillment and outgoing love.

Arthur L. Miller, in *McCormick Speaking.*

* * * *

"God is a spirit." So the older versions
anslate. But the Greek language has no in-
ɛfinite article and the new version is cor-
ɛct, "God is spirit." He is here and he is
ɛverywhere. Don't try to localize him as the
ɑrly Hebrews localized Yahweh on Mt.
ınai or the Greeks Zeus on Mt. Olympus.
on't think of him as a force like electricity.
on't identify him with a mountain or the
ky or any part of the universe or any point
time. He is spirit. Time and space have
ɔthing to do with him. He indwells the
ıiverse as your mind indwells and trans-
nds your body.

This is not so mysterious as it sounds. "Grandfather," asked Dr. Lyman Abbott's small grandson, "how can God be in Newburgh and Poughkeepsie at the same time?" His grandfather touched him on the shoulder. "Are you there?" "Yes." He touched him on the knee. "Are you there?" "Yes." "That is how God can be in Newburgh and Poughkeepsie at the same time."

Frank H. Ferris, *Monday Morning.*

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I have never interpreted the parable of the ten Lepers to mean that only one was grateful. All the ten, surely, were grateful, but nine of them hurried home first, so as to greet their friends and to their business as soon as possible, intending to go to Jesus soon afterwards and thank him. But things turned out otherwise; they were kept home longer than they meant to be and in the meanwhile Jesus was put to death. One of them, however, had a disposition which made him act at once as his feeling bade him; he sought out the person who had helped him and refreshed his soul with the assurance of his gratitude.

In the same way we ought all to make an effort to act on our first thoughts and let our unspoken gratitude find expression. Then there will be more sunshine in the world, and more power to work for what is good. But as concerns ourselves we must all of us take care not to adopt as part of our theory of life all people's bitter sayings about the ingratitude in the world. A great deal of water is flowing underground which never comes up as a spring. In that thought we may find comfort. But we ourselves must try to be the water which does find its way up; we must become a spring at which men can quench their thirst for gratitude.

Albert Schweitzer in *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth.*

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A modern psychiatrist has said, "Throughout the ages religion has been the psychiatry of mankind." By this is meant that many people, through their religion, are able to gain a better perspective of themselves and the world about them. Their religious faith enables them to believe that certain values outweigh other considerations and are worth sacrificing for. Thus, they can appreciate the fact that their own interests and wishes are not necessarily the final end and aim of all of life; that the needs and interests of others are also important.

Judson T. Landis and Mary G. Landis in *Personal Adjustment Marriage and Family Living.*

Faith is an act of rational choice which makes us act as if certain things were true in the confident expectation that they will prove to be true.

Dean Inge

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The only way to present such a lovable God is to make Jesus Christ more real to men than their dearest human friend, and then proclaim the truth that God was in Christ reconciling men to one another and to himself. The lovable God we find in Christ stands in judgment upon our self-centered other-rejecting attitudes. It is our sin which separates us from one another and from God. Effective evangelistic preaching must have in it the stern note of judgment which is but the other side of the cordial invitation of a loving, righteous God.

Arthur L. Miller

* * * *

WHEN I GROW OLD

When I grow old, will people say
That I have helped along the way?
Will they be able to recall
My friendliness to one and all,
To unknown stranger, next-door neighbor,
Without a thought of gaining favor?
Will children small remember me
As one they visited with glee?
Will my sons grown tall and strong,
Accept the right, reject the wrong?
Have I taught them the golden rule
Of living—truths not learned at school?
By my example have I shown
That with the years I too have grown,
That values true I can assess?
Then treasure rare I shall possess—
Not costly jewel by money bought,
But sweet content by service wrought.

Fredda Schaefer in *The Rotarian*

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Under the guidance of a native of that particular part of Africa, Livingstone was cutting across country new to him. After traveling for some time, he began to have some concern about the way and made inquiry of his guide who told him, "There is no road. I am the way." Just as Livingstone had to have faith in his "way," so do we have to have faith in our Way, our Christ. For us, as Christians, there is no road except Christ's Way. He is the only One sent by God, his Father, to lead us through the joys and sorrows of every day living, through death itself to life again. He is the only One who had had the experience, the Only One who knows the whole way.

Lillie Fuller Burr in *Outreach.*

In the splendid motion picture "Wilson" there is set forth the incident which led to the break between Senator Lodge and President Wilson and the tragic aftermath. Both men had favored a League of Nations. In calling on the President, however, Senator Lodge was allowed to wait in an outer office while the President talked with another man. Feelings hurt, pride wounded, these two great men drifted apart and became enemeis while a great cause that needed both of them suffered.

Harrison Ray Anderson in *Monday Morning.*

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The problem for many Christians today is how to be radically detached from the world and dedicated completely to Christ, and yet at the same time to be engaged with the world, implicated in its essential problems and working for its redemption. It is upon the layman that the primary responsibility falls for bringing the Gospel directly into the heart of the world and forming a Christian society there.

But this is no easy task. The world makes its own very exacting demands, which cannot be evaded. It is not as though there were any ready-made Christian solution to the world's economic and social problems. The Gospel is a leaven; it inculcates a spirit; it provides certain guiding principles. But the application of these principles to life is something which requires extraordinary insight and a close acquaintance with practical problems.

In other words, what is demanded of the layman is not only a knowledge and zeal for the principles of the Gospel, but also a very close and exact study of the facts of any situation, economic, social or political, in which he is involved, and of the feelings of the people affected by it. This means that he may have to work with people whose ideology is very different from his own and cooperate in movements which may have not specifically Christian character and yet need to be injected with the spirit of the Gospel . . .

This penetration into the world demands intelligence on the part of the laity; it requires people to think for themselves and to be prepared to act independently, while still keeping to the guidance of the Church in general principles.

Bede Griffiths in *The Commonweal*

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An annual budget is not a list of expenses It is a program of great undertakings for Christ.

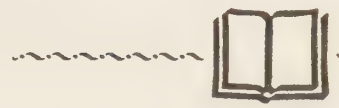
John Henry Soltmann

HAROLD C. PHILLIPS

CLEO Y. BOYD

THEODORE P. FERRIS

THE EASTER CONFIDENCE



Who Will Roll Away the Stone for Us?

HAROLD C. PHILLIPS, First Baptist Church, Cleveland, Ohio

A few months ago a book wash published ntitled *A Night to Remember*. No doubt me of you have read it. It is the story the sinking of the Titanic on her maiden yage. The Titanic was declared to be unnkable — the last word in scientific navi-tion. Actually, the Titanic need not have ne down. She sank because everybody on ard, captain, crew and passengers, be-ved she was unsinkable. It was not real- the iceberg that sank the Titanic; it was erconfidence in man's ability to conquer ture. They failed to take the necessary ecautions and several hundred lives were st.

Our livs, yours and mine, are like a ship sea, and as far as death is concerned we e not overconfident. We know that in ite of all the precautions we may take, is voyage of ours will end in death. How en shall we meet this last enemy — with ar or with faith? In answering the ques-on let us recall an incident of the Gospels. After Jesus was crucified on Good Fri-y, his body when taken from the Cross as placed in a tomb hewn out of rock, and large stone rolled against the door of the mb. Early on Sunday morning, as it be-an to dawn, two women came to the sepul-er to anoint his body. They apparently ad forgotten about the stone! It was large nd heavy and they were women, not men. s they approached the sepulcher, they re-embered it and they began to say to each her, 'Who will roll away the stone for from the door of the tomb?"

Now there are two observations we wish make about this question. The first is at like those two women, we, too, are in-rested in what lies behind the stone. If we re told that tomorrow morning one long nce dead had returned to earth and would ll us all we wished to know of the beyond, ould disclose to us the mystery of the un-own, bring us authentic tidings of that nd from which no traveler has ever re-rned, I think he would have to use tele-sion. For certainly there is no stadium, no y, no state, indeed no country, that would be big enough to accommodate those who would wish to see and hear him.

LIFE HERE AND NOW

Why is it that from the dawn of history until now mankind has wanted to have this stone removed, to know what lies belond the grave? Partly perhaps because of man's innate curiosity — we want to know. Every year finds us pushing back frontiers of ignorance and staking out new territory, marking off new claims for knowledge.

But there is more than just ordinary curiosity here. There is the desire to know because what lies behind that stone, what lies *there*, has so much to do with life *here*. There is a philosophy which says: "One world at a time. We will worry about what lies behind the stone when we get behind it." This attitude is unwise and unreasonable.

For example, if a man knew he was starting for Europe tomorrow, he would not wait till tomorrow to plan his trip. For weeks he would have been preparing—getting his passport, his visas, his traveler's checks, deciding about what to take or leave. Every day of our lives, the future affects the present. What we think or know is going to happen affects what is happening.

It is no different in this matter of which we speak. If a man believes that behind the stone is death, oblivion, nothingness, that belief will, consciously or unconsciously, affect his life here and now, his way of living. If on the contrary he believes that the grave is empty, that the most crowded cemetery in the world is the emptiest place on earth, then that will surely have its effect on his life here and now. We may think of life as an apple. If an apple has worms in it, though the worms are only in a part of it, it is a bad apple never mind how much we polish it. And you do not eat it with much satisfaction. If what lies behind the stone is disease, defeat, death, that willy-nilly injects or affects the life this side of the stone. And we will not live it with confidence and hope and in the feeling that it is really worth-while.

But we want to know what lies behind the stone not only to satisfy our curiosity, intellectual or otherwise; we want to know to satisfy the yearning in our hearts. When we stand by an open grave in which the body of a loved one is to be placed, we are not so much concerned intellectually as we are disturbed emotionally. Death has broken the chords of love, something rich and deeply treasured has been taken from us. Our desire to know what has become of our loved one is not just the kind of curiosity that makes us want to know when we read a detective story how the story ends. It is something much deeper than that. We want to know whether the little candle of love which death has extinguished was something we lit and sheltered against life's hostile or indifferent gales, or whether our little candle originated beyond ourselves and was only a tiny part of some eternal flame, which no wind, however cold and strong, can extinguish. We want to know in other words whether God is love.

These then are just two of the reasons, intellectual and emotional, why from the dawn of history until now men have wanted to know what lies behind the stone.

HOW CAN WE KNOW?

Well, let us now turn to the second question. How are we to know? "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" It seems obvious that we cannot do it. If we could it would have been done long ago. As far as our human knowledge, power or technical skill goes, we are just as impotent in this matter as were the two women who approached the tomb. To be sure, we speculate endlessly as to what lies behind the stone. Some say life lies behind the stone, and others death. I think that as far as arguments go, those who believe in immortality have the better of the argument. But obviously the only way to know what is behind the stone is to get behind it. The only way to know what is behind a closed door is to pass through it, to get on the other side. But when you and I pass through the door of death, the door closes behind us and those on this side of the door are as much in the dark as ever.

It was one of the agnostics—Huxley, I believe—who had inscribed on his tomb the words, "Now I know." He knows, but you and I do not; the door closed behind him as it does when each of us passes through it. Despite the claims of spiritualism — claims we are neither denying nor affirming—I think it is fair to say that all our efforts to penetrate the barrier *from our side* have left us essentially just as much in the dark as we ever were.

Who then will roll away the stone for us so we can know what lies behind it? Ah perhaps time will. Time does erode the rocks. You and I have seen or seen pictures of rocks in some western desert or on some rock-bound coast, carved into interesting or grotesque shapes by the ceaseless knifing of wind and water. But not this stone. It is impervious to the erosions of time. In thousands of years it has changed not at all. There it is! Just as formidable a barrier as ever. Who then will roll the stone away? We cannot, time does. Who then? Maybe God can. Maybe God has!

This is Easter Sunday. Every Christian church across the length and breadth of this fair land of ours today is crowded with worshipers, from tiny unadorned little churches at country crossroads to great cathedrals bedecked with all the pomp and ceremony of ecclesiastical practice. And this is so, with exceptions no doubt, because we believe that what man cannot do and time cannot accomplish, God has done. In the directness of the New Testament narrative we are told that when they reached the tomb the women found the stone had been rolled back, and when they looked in expecting to find a corpse, they found instead a young man clothed in white who told them that Christ had conquered death. Matthew's account is more vivid. He tells us that there was a great earthquake—"for the angel of the Lord descended from heavent, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." Sat upon it!

Now let us be quite honest about all this vivid and striking imagery. Not all accounts of the Resurrection are so dramatic. There is more than one account of the Resurrection in the Gospels and Epistles, and they are not all alike. There are differences, even discrepancies, in the accounts. What one is after here is the core of hard fact that lies behind them. And the core of fact is not how a thing happened but that it happened. And that something happened after the Crucifixion to convince the followers of Jesus that he had conquered death, was alive and with them, is, I suppose, one of the best attested facts of history.

BEFORE AND AFTER

Some years ago a well-known children's hospital published a booklet containing pictures of each crippled child as he was brought in, and as he went out. The booklet was entitled "Before and After." A reader

ght not know how the change occurred those children. He might be ignorant of e processes of the cure, but that it had ocrred was incontrovertible. All he had to was to look at the pictures.

Even so here. One only has to look at e picture of the world before the Resurction, and the same world after, to know at however it happened, something happned to change the world, to change life. is no happenstance that the women came the tomb the first day of the week in e early morning, as it began to dawn. A w day indeed had dawned for man.

Before the Resurrection the disciples anketed by despair, disillusionment, deat—"a group of spiritual cripples . . . " ter, the same disciples with the wraps f—radiant, courageous, committed, determed.

Before the Resurrection, Saul of Tarsus, ard, self-righteous, cruel little man; after, e same man liberated, creative, a truly iversal figure freed from all his pettiss—a redeemed soul.

Before the Resurrection a world without church, without a gospel, we might almost y without hope. After—the birth of the urch, with its message of God's redempve love and power. One thing is certain: t for the faith that Christ conquered ath, not one of us would be here today, for e simple reason that there would be no urch at all. Even the bitter tongued, cyni H. L. Mencken admits this. He did not, course, share any of Christian beliefs. He diculed them. Yet even he said this, ither Jesus arose from the dead or he ln't. If he did, then Christianity becomes ausible (he surely might have used a onger word); if he did not then it is eer nonsense."

He is right. But are we prepared to say at the gospel is nonsense, or that the ristian church is built on a monstrous stake or an illusion? Was it nonsense that erthrew the pagan Roman empire? Was it nsense that inspired some of the finest eations of art, architecture, music and erature? Was it nonsense that broke the ackles of slavery or lifted childhood and manhood from their position of inferiori? Was it nonsense that laid the foundation democracy with its emphasis on the gnity and worth of the lowest or lowliest a child of God, for whom Christ died? Is nonsense that inspires the hearts of men world around today to fight in the me of Christ the evils that are destroy human life: intemperance, exploitation, ustice, greed, prejudice—sin in all its forms? If all this is nonsense, then all one has to say is: "God give us more of this nonsense. It is the only thing that makes any sense out of life."

How Christ conquered death, how this faith gripped the disciples, might always remain a mystery to our finite minds. We can give no better explanation than that of the apostle and say, "God raised him from the dead." But that he conquered death—well, look at the picture of our world before and after Easter.

We have said that we want to know what lies behind the stone. We have said that we cannot roll it away. We have said that Easter tells us that God has rolled it away, to reveal that life, not death, lies behind the stone. This is the message of Easter; this is the faith it asks us to share.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Finally, let us ask, what does this mean for us? What difference does this make to our life on this side of the barrier? Obviously it strengthens immeasurably our faith in our own survival. "I am the resurrection, and the life . . . whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "Because I live, ye shall live also." Easter calls us to believe that God is love, that it is not His will that we perish, that He who created us and redeems us will not at last destroy us. This is the Christian faith. The Resurrection bids us believe that we are not journeying to darkness, but to dawn, that the human enterprise is not headed for the rubbish heap, that behind the stone is light and life and victory.

But this day not only strengthens our faith and hope in what lies beyond for us as individuals. The Resurrection is not only a post-mortem affair. It also has a transforming effect on our life here and now. No one who knows himself or his world but knows that the road to a better life here and now is often blocked by stones which seem as impossible for us to roll away as did the stone that barred the door to Jesus' tomb. What a wonderful world this would be could we only get these stones out of the road to life! For remember, behind the stone, the obstacle, is light and life, a new day!

One can see a sober America, a land where there will be more happy homes, not so much death and destruction on the highway, so much crime and killings. One of the stones between us and that is liquor, which is doing more harm to our country today than you and I have any notion of. Who will remove that stone?

One sees an America in which employer and employee will live as friends and helpers rather than enemies, each concerned about that other's welfare. But between us and that lies such an obstacle—jealousy, greed, the lust for power, maybe even Communist infiltration. How can we get that out of the road?

One sees a world in which men will live as brothers, regardless of race or nation. For that is how God intended us to live. But such a huge rock stands in the path! Who will roll away the stone for us, so we can get at and experience the better life that lies behind it?

It is here that Easter speaks to us. It tells us we must not be afraid of the stone in our way. In rolling back the stone in Joseph's Garden, God removed the biggest of all of them, won the victory over sin and death. All the stones in our way today are but chips off the old block. But the old block, the daddy of them all, so to speak, has been conquered. An angel rolled it away and got on top of it, sat on it! This means that we do not have to be afraid of stones any more.

Easter calls us to go forth in the power of this faith, to win the victory over the obstacles to the better life, the better world assured of the unceasing power of the Eternal God, who fainteth not, neither is weary.

His Resurrection and Ours

CLEO Y. BOYD, Immanuel Baptist Church, Detroit, Michigan

Scripture: I Corinthians 15.

One day a number of years ago I received a letter from a pulpit committee in a small town in Ohio, saying that my name had been suggested to them as a minister for their church. The letter asked me about my beliefs. The writer wanted to know, among other things, if I believed in the resurrection of the body.

I have always had a suspicion that the answer I gave was not what she wanted, for I answered by referring her to the Scriptures where it says: "Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be . . . There are (heavenly) bodies, and bodies (earthly); but the glory of the heavenly is one and the glory of the earthly is another . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."

To put it simply, the answer is this: If you mean, 'Do we believe in the resurrection of the dead?" the answer is "Yes"; but if you mean, "Do we believe in the resurrection of these bodies which we now possess, the answer is "No." But to answer it thus requires explanation as to what we mean by that and why we say it.

It carries us back to a debate which continued among the Israelites for centuries before the coming of Christ. The Sadducees, to which party belonged the high priest and his friends who denounced Jesus before Pilate, believed there was no such thing as a resurrection of the dead because they did not find it explicitly taught in the Old Testament. They were the biblical literalists of their time, and what they could not find specifically and clearly stated in the sacred scriptures of their day they would not believe. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were staunch defenders of the resurrection doctrine and said that those who denied it had no share in the world to come. So strong was this division between them, that the Apostle Paul, when put on trial before the Sanhedrian, and, seeing Sadducees among the Pharisees, knew of an instant what he could do. "Men and brethren," he cried, "it is of the hope of the resurrection of the dead that I am called in question." That was the match that started the conflagration. The two groups got into an argument among themselves. A riot broke out and Paul was finally ushered away to custody for his own safety.

Yet, though it was a shrewd bit of cleverness on his part, make no mistake about it Paul would not have been there if it were not for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This brilliant young man, who had prepared himself to be a Jewish rabbi, came face to face with Jesus one day on the road to Damascus, and became so convinced of His resurrection from the dead that he gave the rest of his life as a witness to it. It was so profound, and so changed all of his thinking, that the resurrection became the central core of all his teaching. He made it clear that the good news of man's deliverance, with the promise of Eternal life, is based not on any philosophical or theological doctrine of the immortality of the soul, but on the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was

e resurrection of Jesus that caused him to come a Christian. And it was the resurction which made the difference between daism and Christianity.

THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

Let us gaze for a moment, then, upon that surrection of Jesus and see, if we may, hat light it can throw upon the meaning life for us. His resurrection has rightly en called "the most incredible and yet the ost convincing fact of history."

I believe that the soul of Jesus never en-red into the tomb. To the one on the cross side Him He has said, "This day thou alt be with me in paradise." Certainly that d not mean that he would be in the tomb th Jesus. The last thing they heard Christ ter as the storms broke over calvary was, 'ather, into thy hands I commend my irit."

The stone was rolled away not to let sus out, but to let others look in. For His body were still there, it would have ade it difficult for them to believe. They ould have thought they were imagining ings.

What then happened to the body? It was t taken away. If it had been stolen by the sciples, as some accusers said, it could not ve remained hidden long without someone nding a trace of it in that small city. rthermore, people do not invent things so at they might be crucified upside down, e Peter, or be stoned to death, like Stehen.

It certainly was not removed by the mans or the Jews. They wanted it right here it was—in that tomb. And if they d taken it away, would they not have proced it gladly in order to squelch the rumor quickly to be spread that He was alive?

Exactly what happened to the earthly dy of Jesus may always remain in mys-ry. His new body was spiritual. "Flesh d blood cannot inherit the kingdom of aven." The body which He then had, and which He ascended into heaven, was a n-physical body. Yet in that spiritual body was recognizable and was capable of con-ting His friends and having fellowship th them. In that form He not only appear-unmistakably to many individuals and to disciples at various times, but also to as ny as five hundred at one time. And we te that it was their coming to know Him *this* manner that finally convinced them, re than the empty tomb. Nor were those st forty days the last time He has revealed Himself to people. Verily, folk have fellowship with Him still.

HIS RESURRECTION COMPARED TO OURS

Now what light does that throw upon a resurrection for us? It says this: There will be a "rising of dead ones." Yes, but not this body. "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be . . . There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." Hence it makes no difference what happens to this body when we are through with it. We have a new body, a spiritual one! As Paul said, 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were disolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

And God has revealed to us through the resurrection of Jesus that "the resurrection body," though spiritual in essence, will be perceptable to the senses. We shall know our friends in heaven.

But you ask, "Does it mean that the next life is the same for all regardless of the quality of their lives here?" No.

CHALLENGE OF THE RESURRECTION

There are some Bible scholars and theologians who believe that heaven and hell may be the same place, for what is heaven to one would be a hell for others who would not be at home in that kind of a place.

The point we need to keep in mind, however, is that each soul rises into such a condition as it is fitted to rise into: those who are prepared for life, unto that, and others unto judgment. "They that have done good, unto the resurrection of Life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (unhappiness)" (John 5:29). Therein is the challenge of the resurrection to us today.

Every soul is immortal and will continue existence whether he wants to or not. But it is not mere existence but life with which we must be concerned; not mere duration, but quality. "To believe in immortality is one thing," wrote Robert Louis Stevenson, "but, first of all, it is needful that we believe in life." Eternal life rather than immortality is the Christian goal. The whole purpose of Christ's coming to this world was to help people find that kind of life. "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10).

Man's life is eternal when he enters into a living relation with God, the Creator of the universe. This is the theme of the fourth Gospel. "He that believeth hath eternal life,

. . . And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God" (John 6:47; 17:3). Christianity's interest, therefore, is in achieving life, not merely preserving existence. Mere existence as such has no value. If it is without meaning here, of what value will it be in the hereafter?

The whole question comes at last to this: What is the ultimate reality in this universe, matter or spirit, things or God? In that next life, where all materialism is stripped away and all is of the spirit, anyone is going to find himself most uncomfortable who has not schooled himself in the spirit here. If we are to enjoy God there, we must learn to here. And when one does come to know the Lord here, such an inner peace and joy comes into his soul that it is nothing short of a spiritual resurrection having taken place in his soul here and now.

In one of the most memorable conversations recorded in the New Testament, Jesus is seeking to press home to the uncomprehending mind of Martha this very truth. Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, is dead and entombed. Jesus comes to the sepulcher, and then with that oriental instinct for the dramatic as the best technique of teaching, He turns to Martha with that questioning statement, "Thy brother shal rise again." And Martha replies, "Yes, know he shall rise again in the resurrectio at the last day." Then Jesus says to her, "Bu Martha, I am the resurrection and the life he that believeth on me, though he dies, ye shall he live; and whosoever believeth on m shall never die." Jesus speaks here of rea death, the death of the soul, the spirit, no of the mere cessation of the pulse and breath which He called "sleeping." In this connection we see the richest significance of the resurrection. Easter means not only that we too, shall exist beyond the experience called "death," but that we may be raised now ou of spiritual death into life. Hence Easter i not so much a message to the dying body as to the dying soul; not simply a song o cheer for those declining into the valley o the shadow of physical death, but more a life-giving word to those slipping into the cold tomb of crass materialism in which the spirit is suffocated. What will it profit al these people if they gain the whole world and lose their own soul?

To all who are spiritually dead or dying Jesus Christ is saying again today: 'I am the resurrection and the life. All who believe in Me and truly follow Me shall live."

The Easter Frame of Mind

THEODORE P. FERRIS, Trinity Church, Boston, Massachusetts

One of the most interesting and intelligent women in the world today is Pearl Buck. She is not only intelligent and interesting, she is good. She is a highly successful novelist, in the first place, but she is also the founder and head of Welcome House, from which hundreds of Asian-American children have been sent to homes in which they could be brought up the way children ought to be brought up. A few years ago she contributed to Edward Murrow's *This I Believe,* and in the course of that chapter she wrote this: "I feel no need for any other faith than my faith in human beings . . . I have enough for this life. If there is no other life, then this one has been enough to make it worth being born, myself a human being."

There is something about a statement like that to which many of us respond, at least the first time we read it. It makes sense. It doesn't say too much. Most of us have enough for life, enough and to spare. We have more than enough to eat and drink, and all we need to wear. There are, to be sure, in our lives disappointments and frustrations, failures and sorrows, but there are also joys and satisfactions and sometimes real fulfillments, at least enough to make it worth while. It's no wonder that we respond to this sensible point of view that this life is enough and that there is not much use in wasting energy thinking about any other life.

WHAT CAN WE KNOW?

So we join the great majority of Americans who are content to leave the question of any other life in the realm of speculation where they presume to think it belongs. Maybe yes, maybe no, they say. Who can tell? What evidence is there one way or the other? Who can dare to prove it or disprove it? They go on to reason with themselves along these lines. We can't do anything about it one way or the other. If it should happen that there is another life, it will be a nice surprise; and if it doesn't happen, we will never know the difference. So why worry about it? The best thing is to keep our noses to the ground, not to the grindstone, that would be too strenuous for comfortable Americans, but to the ground along which we can smell our earthy way, and do the

t we can in the life we know and not lose e thinking of another life about which know little or nothing!

Obviously, I have exaggerated this point view in order to put it before you quickly l sharply, and may I make it quite clear t I am not saying anything in personal ticism of Pearl Buck; I have taken her tement as a symbolic statement represent- a point of view that thousands of good ple just like us share to one degree or ther. It looks so plausible, it sounds so lthy and robust, so normal and red- oded American. It is reasonable, it makes d common sense, so that we don't even lize how far away it is from what we ght call the Easter frame of mind.

am perfectly willing to confess to you t, being a product of the same genera- that brought you into the world, I am metimes unconsciously lured by this point view myself. It is within the easy reach my materialistically conditioned mind , before I stop to think of it, I am caught in it unawares. I feel the pull of it. But far as I am concerned, this point of view s into two big obstacles right away, like ks upon which it eventually comes to ef. And the first is that the really great ple that I know do not share it.

am thinking of people like William nes. He wrote a letter to his father in 2, when his father was in New York and was in London. The news had come to lliam that his father was going to die, bably before he could get back from Lon- in time to see him. And in that wonder- letter to the elder James there were all ts of overtones like this one, "You are e left alone, and on the other side, let us e and pray, dear, dear old Mother is ting for you to join her." And later, in a er to Alice about a new farm that he bought in Chocorua, he wrote this: "It some delightful rooms and, I have no bt, will make us all happy for several rs to come. Not for eternity, for every- ng fades, and I can see that someday we ll be glad to sell out and move on, to nething grander, perhaps." And you know fectly well that he was not talking about rander house, but a grander destiny; for like all the other great people that I e ever known, was a spacious person, too for this plausible point of view, too am- to be crowded into the small idea that s life is enough.

POINTS OF VIEW

noticed the other day two letters, both tten in the year 1818, and both by famous men. And somehow or other they symbolize these two different points of view and, more especially, the two different kinds of men. One was written from St. Helena by Napoleon to his friend Gaspard Gouraud in which he said, "When we are dead, we are dead." The other was written by John Keats to Fannie Brawne, in which he said, "I long to believe in immortality." Somehow, you feel in that sensitive nature that even in the longing there was a measure of fulfillment, and even in the reaching after that life beyond there was, at least to a limited degree, the grasping of it.

So, nine times out of ten, when I meet a person of great bounty, not every time, but nine times out of ten, he has what we might call the Easter frame of mind. And that fact alone makes it hard for me to accept the plausibile idea that this life is all there is, that there isn't any more. The people whom I admire most simply do not share it.

This point of view, of course, rests upon the assumption that we have enough for this life, and Pearl Buck, of course, has much more than enough. She has written and published successfully more than forty books. She has a husband and four adopted children and two of her own, and lives a very happy, prosperous, richly rewarded life. What about the people who don't? That is the second obstacle that this point of view runs into as far as I am concerned. What about the student, twenty years old, accidentally killed in an initiation? He hasn't enough years, let alone anything that the years can bring him, to say that this life is enough for him.

THE INCOMPLETE LIVES

What about the person whose life is as bare as a barn door; he never seems quite to make the grade in life, and his promises never seem to be quite fulfilled the way he'd like them to be; he never has the satisfactions that should rightfully come to any man or woman. What about him? What about the man who was executed, and after the execution it was found out that he was innocent? What about the children whose lives are nipped in the bud? What about the people who live lives of quiet desperation, and who go on to their death without any of the things that make people like Pearl Buck and many others perfectly satisfied to confine their attentions to this life and this life only? I don't see how you can get around that question and those people. If this is all there is to life, it certainly doesn't amount to much for a lot of people. And I would

say that the majority of people come to the end of their days with loose ends flying, injustices and unfairnesses still hanging fire, without the fulfillment which they started out to expect.

So, Easter may not have much to say to people like Pearl Buck, but it has a lot to say to the likes of these people, the people who have missed the bus in life.

We see and hear only a fraction of what there is to see and hear in life. Physically, we know that our hearing only reaches—how many feet is it?—thirty feet; we can see only a certain distance ahead. And yet, how much more there is to see and hear, some of which a television or a radio can bring within the receiving capacity of our minds. We grope our way through the forms and shadows of life, but we always have the feeling that there is much more beyond that we can neither see, nor hear, nor feel. And if there was ever any doubt about it in our mind, that doubt was banished when Jesus rose from the dead. He was one of the ones I was talking about a minute ago; he was one of the ones that life robbed. He was set up before the public as a laughing stock at the end. If that's all there was to life for him, life wasn't worth the battle then, and I hardly think it is now.

His friends saw him after he died; there wasn't the slightest doubt in their minds that they saw him, and that he was alive. He wasn't in exactly the same form that they had known him before, freer, more emancipated, but he was enough like the person they had known so that they recognized him. It wasn't so much that he was living another life as it was that he was living in another dimension of this life, in that margin beyond the things we can normally see and feel and hear. If Jesus was alive, there was more to life than a few short years, quickly spent. If Jesus is alive, there is more to life than meets the eye.

THE LARGER LIFE

Tom Wolfe is one of our fine American novelists, and in one of his first books, *Look Homeward Angel,* he writes about his brother Ben; at least the hero of the novel did, and I take it that it was the author himself. They were as close and intimate as two brothers can be and, when Ben died, h brother wrote this. "We can believe in th nothingness of life, we can believe in th nothingness of death and the nothingness c life after death, but who can believe in th nothingness of Ben?" There's the rub! Wh can? Somehow people who have been draw into any sort of intimate relationship wit Jesus, whether it was in those years whe his friends gathered together with him i Galilee, or whether it is now, people wh have had any kind of experience like tha cannot believe in the nothingness of Jesu And, as we pursue this relationship wit Jesus, this is what happens. The larger lif keeps breaking into our little corners. H brings it with him, so to speak. We may liv in one room, but there is the window ope toward the unbroken seas of life beyond.

Now this isn't plausible; this is myste ious, like life, like the flight of birds hom ward, like the growth of flowers under th snow, like the power of a broken heart t save a human life. It is not easy. It is sca red and worn. This is big. You can't wra it up in cellophane and sell it in corner drug stores at a cut rate. It cannot be parceled ou to Americans in serial form in monthl magazines. This is a view of life that is bi and mysterious and powerful and it come to those who reach out to the margins of lif and find there the God of justice and lov the God of a life far greater than anythin we can find completely here and now.

And in the end, having felt this life drif ing in all the time through the narro cracks in the walls in which we live, in th end, we are led out into the larger life of th spirit of which we have had a foretaste her

In the Winston-Salem community o Moravians in North Carolina there used t be a custom by which they announced th passing of a member by the playing of thre chorales by the church band from the churc tower, as though to proclaim to the wor that here was a life that had emerged fro the shadows and frustrations, the disa pointments and the defeats of life, not in another life, but into the fulfillment of li in God as He revealed it to us in Chris These people had the Easter frame of min It is the frame of mind in which large-scale men and women quietly but confident make their way through the years.